

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly comprising:

(a) a carrier;

(b) a wax skim coat deposited onto said carrier; and

(c) a heat-transfer label, said heat-transfer label being deposited directly onto said wax skim coat for transfer of said heat-transfer label from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, said heat-transfer label consisting of one or more ink design layers, each of said ink design layers being thermosetting and comprising a binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said cross-linking system comprising (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article heated to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled).

4. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said binder comprises one or more resins selected from the group consisting of polyester resins, polyester/vinyl resins, polyamide resins, phenoxy resins, epoxy resins, polyketone resins, and acrylic resins.

5. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 4 wherein said binder additionally comprises a vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin.

6. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 5 wherein said vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin constitutes up to about 25%, by weight, of said binder.

7. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 4 wherein said binder comprises a copolyester resin having a high tensile strength and low elongation.

8. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said colorant is a pigment, said pigment being present in an amount ranging from about 50% to about 200%, by weight, of the total of said binder and said cross-linking system.

9. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 8 wherein said pigment is titanium dioxide.

Claim 10 (Canceled).

11. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said cross-linking resin is present in an amount constituting about 5%-10%, by weight, of said binder.

12. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said cross-linking resin comprises a melamine-formaldehyde resin.

13. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 12 wherein said cross-linking resin comprises a partially methylated melamine-formaldehyde resin.

14. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 12 wherein said heat-activatable catalyst is an amine-blocked sulfonic acid catalyst.

15. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 1 wherein said carrier comprises a paper substrate overcoated with a layer of polyethylene, said wax skim coat being deposited onto said polyethylene layer.

16. (Currently amended) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly comprising:

(a) a carrier; and

(b) a heat-transfer label, said heat-transfer label being deposited directly onto said carrier for transfer of said heat-transfer label from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, said heat-transfer label consisting of one or more ink design layers, each of said ink design layers being thermosetting and comprising a binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said cross-linking system comprising (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article heated to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F;

(c) wherein said carrier is made of a non-wax material that separates cleanly from said heat-transfer label with no visually discernible portion of said carrier being transferred to the article along with said heat-transfer label.

17. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said carrier comprises a polymeric film overcoated with a release coating made of a non-wax, non-silicone, thermoset release material, said release coating having a total surface energy of about 25 to 35 mN/m, of which about 0.1 to 4 mN/m is polar surface energy, and having a carbon content (by atomic %) of about 97% and an oxygen content (by atomic %) of about 3%, as measured by X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy.

18. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 17 wherein said polymeric film is made of a polymer selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyolefins and polyamides and wherein said release coating is made by (i) applying to the polymeric

film in its amorphous or semi-oriented state a composition comprising (a) a functionalized  $\alpha$ -olefin containing copolymer and (b) a crosslinking agent; and (ii) reacting said composition with the polymeric film during uniaxial or biaxial stretching and heat setting.

Claims 19-20 (Canceled).

21. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said binder comprises one or more resins selected from the group consisting of polyester resins, polyester/vinyl resins, polyamide resins, phenoxy resins, epoxy resins, polyketone resins, and acrylic resins.

22. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 21 wherein said binder additionally comprises a vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin.

23. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 22 wherein said vinyl chloride/vinyl acetate resin constitutes up to about 25%, by weight, of said binder.

24. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 21 wherein said binder comprises a copolyester resin having a high tensile strength and low elongation.

25. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said colorant is a pigment, said pigment being present in an amount ranging from about 50% to 200%, by weight, of the total of said binder and said cross-linking system.

26. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 25 wherein said pigment is titanium dioxide.

Claim 27 (Canceled).

28. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said cross-linking resin is present in an amount constituting about 5%-10%, by weight, of said binder.

29. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 16 wherein said cross-linking resin comprises a melamine-formaldehyde resin.

30. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 29 wherein said cross-linking resin comprises a partially methylated melamine-formaldehyde resin.

31. (Previously presented) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 29 wherein said heat-activatable catalyst is an amine-blocked sulfonic acid catalyst.

Claims 32-55 (Canceled).

56. (Currently amended) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly comprising:

(a) a carrier; and

(b) a heat-transfer label, said heat-transfer label being releasably secured to said carrier for transfer of said heat-transfer label from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, said heat-transfer label comprising one or more ink design layers, each of said ink design layers being thermosetting and comprising a binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said cross-linking system comprising (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article heated to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F.

57. (Original) The heat-transfer label assembly as claimed in claim 56 wherein said heat-transfer label consists of said one or more ink design layers.

58. (New) A heat-transfer label assembly, said heat-transfer label assembly consisting of:

- (a) a carrier;
- (b) a wax skim coat deposited onto said carrier; and
- (c) at least one ink design layer deposited onto said wax skim coat for transfer of said at least one ink design layer from said carrier to an article under conditions of heat and pressure, each of said at least one ink design layer being thermosetting and consisting of at least one binder, a colorant and a cross-linking system, said cross-linking system consisting of (i) a cross-linking resin for cross-linking said binder and (ii) a heat-activatable catalyst for catalyzing said cross-linking within about 1-2 minutes after said ink design layer has been transferred to an article heated to a temperature of about 250°F-325°F.